

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Jim McGinty; Mr Joe Francis; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Alan Carpenter

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 25 November.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [3.16 pm]: I will devote most of my speech on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor by reading into *Hansard* some letters or submissions I have received from former members of government who either retired or left Parliament at the last election. These former members requested the opportunity to have a few words said in the Parliament as part of a belated farewell to this place. If the house would indulge me, I will read into *Hansard* letters from some former members of this place who served with distinction and who are no longer here. The first one I have is from the former member for Maylands, Dr Judy Edwards —

Mr Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly thank you for the opportunity of a few words of farewell following my retirement from Parliament at the recent election.

Not long after I was elected to the Parliament in 1990, a retiring member noted that Parliament was not a place where members made a lot of friends. I reject that assertion and have enduring memories of the friendships on both sides of the house that were fostered during my time as a member.

My strongest sense of personal accomplishment was, as a serving member, to have had a baby who I breastfed for a year, while at the same time fulfilling parliamentary duties and increasing my margin at the following election. I could not have achieved this without the support of my family, my electorate staff, or members and staff of this chamber. To all these people — thank you.

Undoubtedly the highlight of my parliamentary career was the opportunity to serve as the environment minister in the Gallop government. I have a strong sense of pride in the achievements our team made in this time, particularly the cessation of logging in old growth forests. Governing is not as easy as it appears from the outside and I treasure the time spent with my colleagues working through difficult issues, looking for the best outcomes for the state. But perhaps the strongest asset our team brought to government back then was a raft of policy and ideas, developed and refined during long years of opposition.

While the capacity to make decisions and deliver when in government was deeply satisfying some of my best work was probably through the small ways in which action in the electorate assisted constituents and the community. I will continue to be proud of small accomplishments such as traffic lights and pedestrian crossings along busy roads, improvements and facilities along the river and even, dare I say it, school toilets!! In our modern times, where decision making is often felt by people to be very distant from their everyday lives, access to local members of parliament is, in my view, more important than ever.

The short time for these few words precludes any great reflection but I want to make two observations. The most positive change I saw in my parliamentary career was the increase in accountability and transparency. This flowed from measures ranging from the FOI Act through to entities such as the Office of Health Review and practices encouraging greater community consultation. All these and more are the necessary tools for democracy. The other more personal observation was my sense that parliamentary committee work became more focussed on the issues being dealt with and subsequently often less party political.

I have a great sense of honour in having been able to serve as a member of the Western Australian parliament, particularly over such a long timeframe. I am indebted to my family, my friends, and in particular my electorate staff who supported me throughout my parliamentary career and made this opportunity possible. I wish to thank them all. I also extend my thanks to all the officers and staff of this parliament. A lot of this work and support is behind the scenes but very much appreciated.

To members of the government, congratulations on your elevation to power. I urge you to use this opportunity wisely. To members of the opposition make use of this chance for reflection and consolidation. In my observation the most forward looking and significant ideas have their gestation in opposition, where there is the time and space to think issues anew!

No matter whether in government or opposition in my view there is no greater privilege than the opportunity to serve the community as a member of parliament.

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That concludes the contribution of the former member for Maylands, Dr Judy Edwards. I will now read out the valedictory speech of the former member for Thornlie and Kenwick, Hon Sheila McHale —

Mr Speaker

I thank you for the opportunity to make a valedictory speech, albeit brief and in absentia.

My congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and to the Premier and his Cabinet on their ascendancy to Government.

After 12 years of Parliament, eight of which were as a Minister, having had the privilege of serving the community of this State under the leadership of former premiers Hon Geoff Gallop and Hon Alan Carpenter, I made the very considered decision in early 2008 to resign from Parliamentary life to shape a new career in a different direction.

Whilst valedictory speeches are typically constructed to reflect on the personal achievements of the individual, and an acknowledgement of those who have been part of those achievements, I want to use these few moments to exhort the Liberal Government not to undo the decisions...the commitments made to the Western Australian community by the former Premier and myself to build infrastructure projects designed to reinvigorate the capital, designed to create a city that can attract people to come and live here for the long term.

Clearly, the current global economic crisis is an assault on our collective confidence. It threatens to paralyse growth but importantly and the signs are there already, it threatens to paralyse vision and creativity within this State. And that would be the worst crisis.

I well understand the impact of the global economic meltdown. This Government has to face, as we would have had to face, higher levels of debt, shrinking revenue and a much more pessimistic outlook.

But this city, this State demands the continued investment in its cultural heart in order to keep alive. We will recover from the meltdown. We won't recover in the long term if projects of significance are jettisoned out of timidity, risk aversion or worse under the guise that the state can no longer afford them.

The planning for projects such as the stadium, the East Perth Museum and the Waterfront development need at least two years. Let that planning continue so that we as a state wanting to move forward can do so when the market corrects itself...as it will.

My achievements and legislative reform are a matter already on the public record. My deep appreciation and gratitude to those I love, hold dear as friends or family are not. So now is the time to do so.

To the people of the electorates of Thornlie and Kenwick, I thank you for the privilege of serving you for 12 years. From the smallest issue to the most complex seemingly insoluble problem I always did my best to find answers.

To my former electorate staff and ministerial staff, it was fun, hard work, painful at times but your spirit and commitment whilst often tested never diminished. To Eve and Veronica in particular thank you for your style and constant support. Thanks to my family, my mother and brother

Finally to my beautiful son Keir. He was 12 years old when he virtually lost me to the world of politics and public duty. Hopefully now at 24 years of age he understands the drive and dedication that I had to serve the community with integrity and dignity. At a cost though I believe to him.

Nevertheless he has been my best mentor, my best friend and in keeping me grounded has fuelled my sense of optimism and hope.

So Mr Speaker it has been an enormous joy and privilege to have worked in some small way to improve the outcomes for the Western Australian community. My best wishes to you all.

That concludes the remarks of the Hon Sheila McHale, former member for Thornlie and Kenwick. I will now read out the valedictory contribution from the former member for Southern River, Mr Paul Andrews —

I would like to take his opportunity to place on record that it has been an honour and a privilege to have served in this house as the Member for Southern River.

I take pride in the fact that there has been great improvement in the electorate over the past seven and a half years. Once there were areas that were in great need of revitalization—shops in Gosnells were very

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rundown with low occupancy rates and subject to vandalism. There were broken windows and an unattractive street scape. People used the train station only as a last resort.

Now there is a clean and more attractive town centre with a fantastic public transport interchange. I am particularly pleased to be able to say that for each year that I was the member a new school was opened in the electorate. Gosnells Senior High School was disgracefully dilapidated in 2000. It is now bright and attractive as are many other of the older schools.

Negotiating to have the Canning Vale Police Station built on Nicholson Rd rather than in the industrial area was another project that proved fruitful. Overall, I am very happy with what my government contributed to the development and revitalization of Southern River,

However, as important as infrastructure projects are, it is the interaction with constituents that was always so important to me. I have many, many fond memories of assisting individuals and families and not very many memories of bad experiences, in retrospect. Being always able to find accommodation for people in urgent need was very satisfying.

The thing that I miss the most is the work of the Parliament and the characters who inhabit it.

The issue that I pursued most consistently was that of organ donation. I thank Members for their support regarding this issue and I can assure you that many of my contacts in the Eastern states regard the Western Australian Parliament as being very well informed and progressive. Amendments to the Coroner's act and the establishment of a paired kidney exchange program together with 'stranger' donation and changes to clinical practice have seen W.A. lead the nation in seeking a solution to increasing donation rates.

My frustration in leaving Parliament is that this work is incomplete. However, I am sure that the new government will take up the challenge; hopefully, where we left off—there are lives to be saved.

I always took the running of the chamber seriously—my third hour in Parliament was spent in the Speaker's chair during an MPI. It is strange that every member has a book entitled 'Standing Orders' and that every one of these is different. It is wise to have read the Standing Order at least once before attacking the Speaker on some ruling.

I think that my greatest contribution to the chamber was serving on the Privilege and Procedure Committee. It was always extremely difficult work with considerable strain but at the end of the day this part of the system worked well.

Somewhat surprisingly, I formed many friendships with Members from the other side of the house and even more surprisingly even a few on my own side. There are a lot of very good people in Parliament who well serve this state. The people of W.A. (and the media) need to be reminded of this.

I thank everyone who has supported me over the years. There have been far too many to name individually.

I feel terrible when I think of the financial burden that I placed upon my family in trying to enter Parliament and now upon leaving,

I also regret the strain that they have had to endure. My children make me feel bad when they talk about dropping pamphlets, handing out 'how to vote cards' running late because the old man was always on the phone. They put up with so much and got nothing in return. Thank you Lara, Rebecca and Peter.

I can't forgive myself for putting my wife through so much—the enormous sacrifices she has made (working extra Sunday shifts to pay for letter box drops); the late nights and having to run the house and family by herself day after day; working in the office when there was only one E.O.; attending innumerable functions with me—all the while being totally dedicated to the principles for which we stand. She was not a passive politician's wife. She is highly devoted to the community and the electorate. She never complained. Plus she gave me a kidney. I love you Gim, you are right—you don't deserve me!

Thank you for this opportunity and may God bless you all.

That was the contribution of former member for South River, Mr Paul Andrews. Finally, I will read the contribution of the former member for Wanneroo, Dianne Guise —

I wish to thank my former Parliamentary colleagues for this opportunity to express my thanks for the privilege and pleasure of serving the people and electorate of Wanneroo.

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When I first became the Member, the Wanneroo electorate stretched north along the coast from Burns Beach to the Shire of Gingin border and east to the Shire of Swan from the south eastern suburb of Marangaroo.

One of the hardest things about being the Member for Wanneroo and facing two redistributions was the inevitable boundary changes and the loss of, not just places on a map, but the people. People whom you have formed friendships with, fought for, supported, laughed with and in some instances cried with ... But this was the reality for me, with such a large growing population.

As a staunch advocate and supporter of “one vote one value”, the irony of losing my seat in the first election where this became a reality for the electors of Western Australia, has not been lost on me, however despite this, I am immensely proud to have served in a government where we restored this basic democratic right.

I wish to thank the people of Wanneroo for their support and friendship, together we were able to bring about some real changes in the region since my election in 2001.

I am proud to have helped secure funding for significant initiatives such as:

- \$136M to provide 13 new Primary, Middle and Senior High Schools and funding for refurbishments and upgrades to various schools across the electorate.
- The new Dental Health Clinic, stage one redevelopment of Joondalup Health Campus, expansion of the inpatient mental health unit at Joondalup, the Child and Adolescent Health Centre at Clarkson, and
- \$6M towards GP Super Clinic in Wanneroo.
- \$8M for the Wanneroo Town site redevelopment including rebuilding Aquamotion and construction of the new Cultural and Learning Centre, funding to support various community organisations and sporting clubs and for the new Police Station in Wanneroo.
- \$7.9M for various environmental projects including beach restoration and the provision of new facilities.
- Major road works including extension of Mitchell Freeway, dual carriageway extension of Wanneroo Road and intersection improvements.
- the extension of the Northern Suburbs Railway to Clarkson, and
- Improved and expanded bus services to outlying suburbs.

One of my biggest pleasures was working in the community with some truly wonderful people, whether they be the professionals working in the government or non-government sector, private companies or the many volunteers helping out in the large number of sporting clubs, school P&C's or various other community groups—they made and will continue to make a huge contribution and to them I wish to say a heartfelt thanks.

There are too many to name, but they will know to whom I refer. To each and every one of them I owe a debt of gratitude, these are the people that helped to bind our community together, often working tirelessly and without a great deal of thanks. It was a pleasure to work with them and I will treasure the friendships made during my time as the Member for Wanneroo.

There is unfinished business in my electorate and I urge the new government to introduce the Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment required for the east Wanneroo region. Having worked tirelessly on the East Wanneroo Land Use and Water Management Strategy in preparation of introducing such an amendment, it needs to be finalised so that people living in the area have the certainty they deserve about their future.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. McGOWAN: The letter continues —

I also urge the Government to embrace the use of recycled treated waste water, at least for use within an agricultural/industrial context and for watering our parks and gardens. It is totally unacceptable for perfectly good water to be pumped out into the ocean and not re-used in this manner, particularly in areas of need. If you have any doubts look beyond our shores; countries like Israel have successfully and safely used treated waste water for years to grow crops and for other purposes.

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A defining moment for me was being privileged to have met Cheryl and Peter Meehan. Following the death of their daughter Jess we formed a close bond and worked together with the Attorney General, the Member for Fremantle on the Road Traffic Amendment (Dangerous Driving) Bill 2004, also known as 'Jess's Law', that ensures tougher penalties are applied to dangerous drink drivers. It is a fitting tribute to their love, honesty, courage and commitment.

Despite what often appears to be the broadly accepted public opinion of Parliamentarians—"that they can't really effect change", it was my experience that there were any number of opportunities to do so, whether it be as an individual or as a member of a particular caucus or committee.

I enjoyed very much the time I spent on the Education & Health Standing Committee producing major reports and recommendations on a diverse range of topics. I don't think we should ever underestimate the value of our committee system, the investigative travel to the Pilbara and Kimberley region of our state and to the Cape York Peninsula will remain an indelible memory for me and I believe that the reports delivered from our inquiry are of real value.

Looking back on my first speech, with its emphasis on education and recognition of volunteers I worked diligently to ensure I delivered in both of these areas. I am also immensely proud to have been part of a Government that brought in legislation to put an end to sexual discrimination.

However it saddens me that I was not able to do more to deliver a fairer wages structure for women workers in Western Australia to end the inequity in their pay and conditions. I urge the Parliament to continue to address this issue, particularly as it appears that women in this state are falling even further behind their male counterparts.

I wish to thank my former colleagues for the trust and faith shown in electing me as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament in 2001 and again in 2005 to support the Speaker to maintain the procedures, practices and privileges of the House. Professor David Black was quick to point out to me that, not only was I the first woman to hold this position; I was the first person, male or female to be elected as Deputy Speaker in their first term of Parliament. We now have a second, I understand, in the Member for Mount Lawley and I wish him all the best in his new position.

The Procedure and Privileges Committee needs to be given some serious thought by Parliament as to its membership and role, which I believe is absolutely essential.

The work of this committee has changed and there are serious matters pertaining to parliamentary privilege that need to be resolved in my view, so that members may continue to undertake their work without fear or favour.

As for the Parliament, my thanks and best wishes to all the wonderful staff—the members are well served by this group of very professional and friendly people.

I also wish to place on record my thanks for the friendship, unwavering support and assistance given to me by my Electorate Officer Marilyn Thorp.

Marilyn worked tirelessly for the people in Wanneroo and a better person would be hard to find. She was immensely popular with the community, a testament to her hard work, capacity, ethics, values, and wit.

In recent years I was also fortunate to have Bryden Dempsey-Lees working as part of our team, a bright young intelligent woman, hard working, loyal and friendly.

Team Guise—we worked hard, were colourful at times and enjoyed a good laugh to get us through the tough times—we shared an amazing journey together and I couldn't have done it without these two tremendous women.

The class of 2001, as we often referred to ourselves, were a fairly tight knit group—I have memories of rushing into the chamber in the early days to hear one of the then Member for Moore's —

Bill McNee —

more colourful speeches—usually including the necessary references to sheep and stinking fish! Those were the days to listen and learn from others who had been around long enough to know the ropes.

I trust that my record will show that I did take the time to listen and learn. To all that mentored, supported and assisted me during my time in this place, I say thank you.

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Lastly to my family, only you know the price that comes with the job if one is prepared to work hard and loyally for their electorate. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your love and support, I think I finally learned to get the balance right, but it took a while. To new members I pass on this piece of advice given to me from a former member—"look after your family, your personal business and remember your friends, as they will be there for you when you exit from this place". It was very good advice.

That concludes the commentary from four members of the former government who left this place. I thank the house for its indulgence in allowing me to put on record those, in effect, valedictory speeches from members who provided good service to the house.

Amendment to Motion

Mr M. McGOWAN: Not wishing to detract from the good spirit and good humour of the speech I was just reading to the house—unfortunately, I think I will—I now move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply. I move —

but regret to inform His Excellency that the government has failed to provide the standards in government that it promised the people of Western Australia

I move that amendment based upon my memories of the current government when it was in opposition. When it was in opposition, it sat on this side of the house and its common complaint was that there was a lack of standards in public office. I will admit that the former government had some difficulties with some of its people, and some extraneous people to this Parliament about some of the things they did. Two things need to be remembered: firstly, when issues came to the attention of the former Labor Premiers and governments, they dealt with the people involved and dealt with them harshly—more so than perhaps any government in history. That was a lesson, I think, to governments in Australia, particularly in Western Australia, as to what needs to happen.

Secondly, what must be remembered is that those issues came to light because of the steps that the Gallop and Carpenter governments took to create a Corruption and Crime Commission. There are arguments around the scope and power of that commission, but the only reason those issues came to light and were brought to public attention was through a body that those governments created and put in place. Not only did those governments take action to deal with issues of improper conduct and corruption, they actually created the body that brought those issues to light. Those two points need to be remembered before people start trying to deflect the issues that this current government faces. They are issues of history.

The current government came to office professing high standards. I recall the now Premier, former—I do not even think he was a frontbencher; whatever role he played in opposition—saying that, if ever brought back to government, that government would put in place high standards. Well, it has failed the first test. It has failed to understand that people in public office need to distinguish between their public and private duties. They need to understand that one impinges upon the other, and they cannot exercise their private duties using their public office. Those two responsibilities are naturally intermingled, which means people have to separate themselves from their private interests as public figures.

When we are elected to this place, whether as just an elected member or whether accorded the privilege of serving as a minister, members need to recall that they have been given a privileged position with power and influence in the broader community. When members are given that position of power and influence in the broader community, along with the resources that go with it as a minister, along with the resources that go with it as a member, along with the powers that ministers often exercise under legislation—particularly in positions such as Minister for Environment or Minister for Mines and Petroleum or Minister for Planning—they must remember that specific, virtually judicial, powers are given to make decisions upon issues that impinge on other people's lives. Members must exercise that responsibility without regard to their own private interests. The opposition successfully raised that issue about the current Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Hon Norman Moore. That is the same issue we raised about the member for Scarborough and the Minister for Planning; namely, that members cannot allow their private interests to become involved in their public responsibility.

Some people—the Premier in particular—do not seem to understand the point the opposition is making. He glosses over these issues as though we are somehow attacking someone because of their gender or because they are young. We are not doing that. If someone is given the responsibility as a member of this place, they have to exercise that responsibility without regard to their private interests. Firstly, I think members should not be lobbying any minister about anything to do with their private interests, and all members should read the Resolutions of the House section at the back of the standing orders under paragraph (8). I will quote paragraph (8)(a) so that members of the government can actually understand what it is —